

Statement

Discours

Department of  
External  
Affairs



Ministère des  
Affaires  
extérieures

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

NOTES FOR REMARKS

BY THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT,  
THE HONOURABLE MONIQUE LANDRY,  
AT THE PLENARY SESSION OF THE  
UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE

PARIS

October 24, 1989.

Minister for  
External Relations and  
International Development

Ministre des  
Relations extérieures et du  
développement international

Canada

MR. PRESIDENT,

I ADD MY CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ELECTION TO THOSE EXPRESSED BY THE PREVIOUS SPEAKERS, AND HOPE THAT YOUR PRESIDENCY WILL BE ONE OF SOLID ACHIEVEMENTS.

MR. DIRECTOR GENERAL AND DELEGATES, I HAVE THE HONOUR OF SPEAKING TO YOU, WHEREAS IN NEW YORK, THE MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS ARE COMMEMORATING UNITED NATIONS DAY IN VARIOUS WAYS. THIS YEAR, IT IS CANADA'S PRIVILEGE TO ARRANGE THE CELEBRATIONS FOR U. N. DAY. CANADA'S GOVERNOR GENERAL AND THE MONTREAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ARE AT U. N. HEADQUARTERS, IN NEW YORK, ON THIS OCCASION.

MR. PRESIDENT, CANADA HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF UNESCO SINCE THE ORGANIZATION WAS FOUNDED IN 1946. CANADA IS A MEMBER OF UNESCO BECAUSE WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IT FEELS A RESPONSIBILITY TO WORK FOR PEACE, AND ALSO BECAUSE IT SEES THE ENORMOUS TASK THAT LIES AHEAD IF WE ARE TO MEET THE ASPIRATIONS BOTH PROFOUND AND ORDINARY OF THE WORLD'S PEOPLES FOR THEIR RIGHTS AND THEIR WELFARE. CANADA IS A MEMBER OF UNESCO BECAUSE IT BELIEVES THAT THE ORGANIZATION'S PROGRAMS IN THE REALMS OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, CULTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS ARE NEEDED. IN UNESCO, CANADA HAS A STRONG SENSE OF SERVING A NOBLE CONCEPT AND A CAUSE OF THE HIGHEST DIGNITY.

AS A UNESCO MEMBER, CANADA HAS DECIDED TO BECOME MORE DEEPLY INVOLVED IN THE ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES BY PRESENTING A HIGHLY QUALIFIED CANDIDATE FOR A SEAT ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD.

MR. PRESIDENT, AS A COUNTRY OF CONTINENTAL SIZE, CANADA ASCRIBES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES IN THE REALM OF NATURAL SCIENCE. WE ARE INTERESTED NOTABLY IN THE MAN AND BIOSPHERE PROGRAM AND IN THE ACTIVITIES CONNECTED WITH THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION.

IN CONNECTION WITH THE FORMER, CANADA HAS PLAYED A KEY ROLE BY, AMONG OTHER THINGS, ESTABLISHING FIVE BIOSPHERE RESERVES IN SUPPORT OF THE WORLD NETWORK CREATED BY UNESCO. THIS VAST INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM IS A CONCRETE APPLICATION OF THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. IT THUS CONTRIBUTES TOWARD IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BRUNDTLAND COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT, AND THE PRINCIPLES OF THE WORLD CONSERVATION STRATEGY.

STILL IN THE SCIENTIFIC SECTOR, I WOULD EMPHASIZE THE GREAT IMPORTANCE THAT WE ASCRIBE TO THE WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION, AND THAT OF THE INTERNATIONAL HYDROLOGICAL PROGRAM.

CANADA PLAYED A LEADING ROLE IN WRITING THE CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE. THE COUNTRIES SUBSCRIBING TO THIS UNESCO INSTRUMENT NUMBER 111. CANADA HAS THUS ASSOCIATED

ITSELF WITH A CONVENTION THAT HAS BEEN APPLIED WITH REMARKABLE SUCCESS ON A WORLD SCALE.

THE CONCEPT OF THE COMMON HERITAGE OF MANKIND LIES AT THE HEART OF THIS CONVENTION THAT HAS GIVEN IT FORM AND SUBSTANCE. THE RESULT HAS BEEN ACTIONS OF WORLDWIDE SIGNIFICANCE. THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST INCLUDES TEN CANADIAN SITES. LET ME SAY THAT I AM VERY PROUD OF THIS.

MR. PRESIDENT, I WOULD LIKE TO SAY TWO THINGS ABOUT ONE OF THESE SITES, THE CITY OF QUEBEC: LAST MONTH, WITH THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL, THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT AND THE CANADIAN COMMISSION FOR UNESCO, I INAUGURATED A UNESCO LIAISON OFFICE IN QUEBEC CITY. SECONDLY, QUEBEC CITY WILL BE THE VENUE OF A SYMPOSIUM ON WORLD HERITAGE CITIES IN 1991.

MR. PRESIDENT, THE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES ADDRESSED BY UNESCO. WE WISH TO SEE A GREATER EFFORT MADE TO EXCHANGE AND DISTRIBUTE INFORMATION ON ALL ACTIVITIES IN THIS FIELD. WE ARE PREPARED TO HELP ACHIEVE THIS.

GOVERNMENTS MUST SHOW THEIR COMMITMENT IN THIS VITAL SECTOR BY TAKING CONCRETE ACTION TO GUARANTEE FULL ENJOYMENT OF AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. IN THIS SPIRIT, CANADA FULLY SUPPORTS, AT ALL LEVELS, THE UNESCO INITIATIVES TO ENCOURAGE THE TEACHING OF HUMAN RIGHTS AS PART OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE IN BRINGING RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS INTO LINE WITH THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE, ESPECIALLY IN THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DATA PROCESSING GENERALLY. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL PROGRESS RAISES SOME SERIOUS ETHICAL QUESTIONS. WE ENCOURAGE UNESCO TO DO EVEN MORE TOWARD INCREASING RESEARCH IN THIS SECTOR AND PROMOTING EXCHANGES OF INFORMATION AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.

MORE ATTENTION NEEDS TO BE GIVEN TO THE QUESTION OF ELIMINATING ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION. THE EMPHASIS MUST BE PLACED ON SETTING THE INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS IN MOTION BY A FIRMER COMMITMENT FROM THE SIGNATORY COUNTRIES AND BY THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNAL MECHANISMS TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS IN THOSE INSTRUMENTS.

CONSCIOUS OF ITS OWN RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARD ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATION, THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT HAS SET ITSELF THE TASK OF PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY THAT TREATS EACH OF ITS MEMBERS WITH FAIRNESS AND RESPECT. IT HAS PASSED A MULTICULTURALISM ACT DESIGNED TO GIVE EVERY CANADIAN AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN HIS OR HER SOCIETY ON AN EGALITARIAN BASIS, IN ALL WALKS OF LIFE. THIS ACT CONCEPTUALIZES CANADA'S AS A PROGRESSIVE, JUST SOCIETY THAT NEGLECTS NONE OF THE PEOPLES COMPOSING IT.

AMONG THE IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS OCCURRING IN THE SOCIAL FIELD IN CANADA IS THE PLANNED CREATION OF A DEPARTMENT OF MULTICULTURALISM AND CITIZENSHIP. ITS TASK WILL BE TO PROMOTE AN UNDERSTANDING OF VALUES INHERENT IN CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP AND TO ENCOURAGE GENERAL PARTICIPATION IN THE SOCIAL, CULTURAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE COUNTRY. IT WILL ALSO ENCOURAGE WITHIN OUR SOCIETY A GREATER AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN RIGHTS, FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS AND THE VALUES THAT STEM FROM THEM.

MR. PRESIDENT, EDUCATION IS UNESCO'S MOST NOTEWORTHY FIELD OF ENDEAVOUR. IT IS ALSO AN AREA OF THE HIGHEST IMPORTANCE TO US.

CANADIAN EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITIES HAVE NOTED AND SUPPORT THE EMPHASIS BEING PLACED BY THE ORGANIZATION THROUGHOUT ALL MAJOR PROGRAM AREAS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BOTH FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AS THE KEY TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN UNESCO MEMBER COUNTRIES. THIS DIRECTION BY UNESCO REFLECTS THE FACT THAT EDUCATION CONTINUES TO BE THE MAJOR DETERMINANT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FUTURE OF DEVELOPING AND DEVELOPED COUNTRIES ALIKE.

CANADA STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE NECESSITY OF PLACING GREAT EMPHASIS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS, PARTICULARLY AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL, IN THE STRUGGLE TO EXPAND LITERACY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. WE ARE CONVINCED THAT SUPPORT MUST ALSO BE GIVEN TO PURSUING THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION. IT IS OUR BELIEF THAT, WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF LIFE-LONG LEARNING, FORMAL SCHOOLING AND ADULT EDUCATION ARE COMPATIBLE AND COMPLEMENTARY APPROACHES TO THE PROBLEM OF ILLITERACY. IN THIS SENSE, CANADA SUPPORTS THE INCREASED VISIBILITY THAT THE EXECUTIVE BOARD PROPOSES FOR A DUAL-TRACK STRATEGY IN THE THIRD MEDIUM-TERM PLAN.

THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT CREATED A NATIONAL LITERACY SECRETARIAT IN 1987, GIVING IT A FIVE-YEAR BUDGET AND A MANDATE TO REDUCE ILLITERACY IN CANADA. THIS EFFORT ADDS TO THOSE OF CANADA'S PROVINCES. WE FEEL THAT AS SOON AS IT CAN, UNESCO MUST CONSIDER INCREASING THE BUDGETS FOR WOMEN'S LITERACY. WE MUST ALSO CONSIDER WAYS OF ENCOURAGING YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS WHO HAVE RECENTLY BECOME LITERATE TO PARTICIPATE MORE FULLY IN COMMUNITY LIFE.

WE ARE ALSO ENCOURAGED BY AND SUPPORTIVE OF THE ADDITIONAL EMPHASIS PLACED IN THE THIRD MEDIUM-TERM PLAN ON THE IMPORTANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION, AND WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE EMPHASIS GIVEN TO TRAINING AND TEACHER TRAINING IN ADDRESSING THE QUESTION OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT. THE EXPANDING NUMBER OF LINKAGES THAT EXIST BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING IN CANADA AND THEIR SISTER INSTITUTIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD IS INDICATIVE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND LENDS FURTHER SUPPORT TO THE CONCEPT OF UNIVERSALITY AS A FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTIC OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

THE BENEFITS WHICH ACCRUE TO ALL PARTNERS ARE IMMEASURABLE AND GO FAR BEYOND SIMPLE INSTITUTION-TO-INSTITUTION LIAISON.

UNESCO HAS ELECTED TO INCORPORATE THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN INTO ALL OF ITS MAJOR AREAS OF ACTIVITY. CANADA SUPPORTS THIS DECISION WHILE STRESSING THAT WOMEN MUST BE NOT ONLY BENEFICIARIES OF, BUT ALSO PARTNERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THOSE ACTIVITIES.

I NOW WISH TO LOOK AT THE SUBJECT OF CULTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS. THE LATTER RESULTS IN A GLOBALIZATION OF CULTURE, WHILE THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES TRANSCEND BOUNDARIES BETWEEN COUNTRIES. UNDER THESE CONDITIONS, MAINTAINING A SEPARATE CULTURAL IDENTITY AND A VIABLE INFORMATION SECTOR IS A DIFFICULT TASK. UNESCO MUST PLAY A PART IN DELINEATING AND ASSESSING THE FORCES INVOLVED IN THIS COMPLEX ISSUE. IT MUST ALSO, THROUGH ITS WORK, HELP ENSURE THAT THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES SERVE MEN AND WOMEN: I SAY SERVE, AND NOT SUBJUGATE.

FOR CANADA, AN IMPORTANT LINK EXISTS BETWEEN THE WORLD DECADE FOR CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND OUR DEEP COMMITMENT TO AID AND COOPERATION ON ALL CONTINENTS. AS A COUNTRY POSSESSING ADVANCED COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES, WE FEEL THAT THE LEAST FAVOURED SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO THE SAME SERVICES AS THE OTHERS.

CONTINUING WITH THE SUBJECT OF CULTURE, WE ARE FOLLOWING THE SAME PATH AS UNESCO IN OUR EFFORTS TO PROVIDE THE TYPE OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONDITIONS IN WHICH ARTISTS AND OTHER CREATIVE PEOPLE MIGHT BEST FUNCTION. THESE INCLUDE PROVIDING NORMAL LIVING CONDITIONS, A CLIMATE CONDUCIVE TO ARTISTIC CREATION, PROTECTION OF COPYRIGHT, ETC.. WE SUPPORT THE ACTIVITIES OF UNESCO IN THIS SECTOR AND IN THE PROTECTION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE.

IN OUR VIEW, THE INFORMATION SOCIETY IN WHICH WE BELONG MUST USE THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO FACE THE CHALLENGES OF INTERNATIONAL DATA AND INFORMATION EXCHANGES NOW AND IN THE FUTURE. THUS, WE SUPPORT UNESCO'S PROGRAMS IN THE AREAS OF ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES. THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES CONGRESS TO BE HELD IN MONTREAL IN 1992 ON THE ROLE OF ARCHIVISTS IN THE ERA OF INFORMATION HAS BEEN DESIGNATED BY UNESCO AS ONE OF THE SPECIAL EVENTS IN THE DECADE OF CULTURE.

THE EXCHANGES OF CULTURAL HERITAGE INFORMATION THAT EMPLOY DATA BANKS AND COMPUTERIZED SYSTEMS SHOULD NOT BE OBSTRUCTED. CANADA WILL SUBMIT A DRAFT RESOLUTION AT THIS CONFERENCE PROPOSING A FEASIBILITY STUDY ON CONDUCTING AND FURTHERING INFORMATION EXCHANGES ON THE CULTURAL HERITAGE.

MR. PRESIDENT, ON THE DIFFICULT SUBJECT OF COMMUNICATIONS, CANADA WILL CONTINUE TO DEFEND THE ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE OF FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION, BUT THE DEBATE ON THIS POINT SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO SCREEN THE REAL QUESTION AT ISSUE.

THERE IS NOT A GAP, BUT A GULF BETWEEN THE COMMUNICATIONS RESOURCES OF THE INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES AND THOSE OF THE OTHER NATIONS.

IT WAS PRECISELY BECAUSE OF THIS SITUATION THAT THE INSTIGATORS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS DECIDED TO PLACE THE EMPHASIS NOT ON ARGUMENT OVER THEORIES BUT ON SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS. CANADA NOTES WITH SATISFACTION THE PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN THE PROCEDURE TO SELECT PROJECTS THAT THE MODEST RESOURCES OF THIS INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM ARE SUPPOSED TO FINANCE.

IN THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD DECADE FOR CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, WE MUST MAKE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO CONVINCING THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES TO ALLOCATE A FAIR SHARE TO COMMUNICATIONS IN DEVELOPMENT, TAKING CARE TO RESPECT FULLY THE CULTURAL IDENTITIES INVOLVED.

LOOKING TOWARD THE NEXT GENERAL CONFERENCE IN 1991, CANADA WILL STUDY THE POSSIBILITY OF AGAIN SEEKING ELECTION TO THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS. IN THE MEANTIME, WE ARE PREPARED TO EXAMINE CLOSELY SOME PARTICULARLY VALID PROJECTS IN THIS INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM.

MR. PRESIDENT, WE FEEL THAT UNESCO SHOULD BENEFIT SIGNIFICANTLY FROM THE IMPROVED WORLD POLITICAL CLIMATE, BECAUSE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN PARTNERS NOW DIVESTED OF A PRIORI IDEOLOGIES ARE CONSIDERABLE. WE ALSO FEEL THAT UNESCO TODAY HAS THE OPPORTUNITY AS WELL AS THE OBLIGATION TO FULFILL ITS MISSION. THE ORGANIZATION AND ITS MEMBER STATES CANNOT PASSIVELY STAND BY WHEN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS ARE INADEQUATE, MINORITY CULTURES ARE BEING ERODED AND THE ENVIRONMENT IS BEING DESTROYED.

THIS SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN TO MEAN THAT WE ARE CALLING FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF UNESCO INTO A DEVELOPMENT AGENCY, WHEN THOSE THAT ALREADY EXIST HAVE HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES THAT FAR SURPASS OURS. ON THE CONTRARY, WE CONTINUE TO HOLD FAST TO THE CONCEPT OF UNESCO AS A PLACE FOR INTERNATIONAL INTELLECTUAL COOPERATION AND REFLECTION.

AS A FORUM FOR INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY AND A SCHOOL OF TOLERANCE, UNESCO IS THERE TO SERVE AS A REMINDER THAT ITS WORLD VIEW IS, TO PARAPHRASE ANDRÉ GIDE, ONLY ONE OF A THOUSAND WAYS IN WHICH LIFE CAN BE APPROACHED. WITH THIS IN MIND, THE MEMBER STATES OF THE ORGANIZATION WILL TRULY STRIVE TO PROMOTE COOPERATION BETWEEN COUNTRIES WHOSE CAPABILITIES AND NEEDS IN EDUCATION, SCIENCE, CULTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS DIFFER WIDELY.

MR. PRESIDENT, BELIEVING THAT IN SO DOING IT HAS HELPED DEVELOP A COMMON PERCEPTION OF UNESCO'S ROLE, CANADA HAS IN RECENT YEARS

ENDEAVOURED TO BETTER DEFINE THE NATURE OF ITS INTERESTS IN THE ORGANIZATION. I HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING THOSE INTERESTS IN A COMPREHENSIVE MANNER. I FEEL THAT I HAVE ALSO CLEARLY PROCLAIMED CANADA'S ATTACHMENT TO UNESCO.

BEFORE CLOSING, MR. PRESIDENT, I WISH TO SAY TO OUR DIRECTOR GENERAL THAT CANADA SUPPORTS YOU IN YOUR TASK OF PROGRAM EXECUTION AND OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL REFORM OF THE ORGANIZATION. THE QUALITY OF THE DOCUMENTS PREPARED FOR THIS GENERAL CONFERENCE, IN PARTICULAR THE THIRD MEDIUM-TERM PLAN, HAS BEEN EXCELLENT.

MY CONGRATULATIONS ALSO, MR. DIRECTOR GENERAL, ON THE NEW AND I AM SURE VERY USEFUL MOBILIZING PROJECTS AND TRANSVERSE PROGRAMS. PLEASE ACCEPT MY CONGRATULATIONS ON THE RESTRUCTURING AND CONCENTRATION OF THE PROGRAM.

ONCE AGAIN, MAY ALL WHO ARE INVOLVED IN THIS GENERAL CONFERENCE FIND IT TO BE A VERY SUCCESSFUL ONE.

THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT.